

RULE (95)  
MANDATORY PARENTING SEMINARS

(A) Definition of Applicable Cases. This rule applies to all cases filed under Ch. 26.09 or Ch. 26.26 of the RCW filed after January 1, 1996, including dissolutions, legal separations, major modifications and paternity actions (in which paternity has been established) where the parties are parents of children under the age of 18, and where a parenting plan or residential plan is required which involves more than purely financial issues.

(B) Parenting Seminars; Mandatory Attendance. In all cases referred to in Section (A) above, and in those additional cases arising under Title 26 RCW where a court makes a discretionary finding that a parenting seminar would be in the best interest of the children, both parents, and such nonparent parties as the court may direct, shall participate in, and successfully complete, an approved parenting seminar. Standards for an approved parenting seminar shall be established by Administrative Order of this court. Successful completion shall be evidenced by a certificate of attendance filed by the provider agency with the court.

(C) Special Considerations/Waiver.

(1) In no case shall opposing parties be required to attend a seminar together.

(2) Upon a showing of domestic violence or abuse which would not require mutual decision making pursuant to RCW 26.09.191, or that a parent's attendance at a seminar is not in the children's best interest, the court shall either:

- (a) waive the requirement of completion of the
- (b) provide an alternative voluntary parenting

seminar; or  
seminar for battered spouses.

(3) The Court may waive the seminar requirement for one or both parents in any case for good cause shown.

(D) Failure to Comply. Nonparticipation, or default, by one parent does not excuse participation by the other parent. Respondent's refusal, delay or default will not delay the progress of the case to a final decree; however, Respondent will not be allowed to seek affirmative relief in this or subsequent proceedings, except certain Temporary Orders, on parenting issues until the seminar has been successfully completed. Petitioner's refusal or delay will prevent the case from being tried or any final order affecting the parenting/residential plan being entered in Petitioner's favor. Willful refusal or delay by either parent may constitute contempt of court and result in sanctions imposed by the court or may result in the imposition of monetary terms, default and/or striking of pleadings.

(E) Petitioners in all applicable cases as defined in subsection (A) above shall serve a notice as provided by the Clerk's Office upon Respondents notifying them of the requirements of this court rule. The notice shall be served with the initial pleadings.

[Adopted effective January 1, 1996.]

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